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Agenda item 58

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Macaire KABORE (Burkina Faso)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled:

"Reduction of military budgets:

"(a) Reduction of military budgets;

"(b) Transparency and reduction of military budgets"

was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly in accordance with its resolution 46/25 of 6 December 1991.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 24 September 1993, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 14 October 1993, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 57 to 75 and 77 to 82. The deliberations on those items took place at the 3rd to 14th meetings, from 18 to 22, 25, 26 and 28 October (see A/C.1/48/SR.3-14). Consideration of draft resolutions on those items took place at the 18th to 23rd meetings, from 3 to 5, 8 and 9 November (see A/C.1/48/SR.18-23). Action on draft resolutions on those items took place at the 24th to 30th meetings, on 11, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 19 November (see A/C.1/48/SR.24-30).

4. In connection with item 58, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on reduction of military budgets: military expenditures in standardized form reported by States (A/48/271 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) Letter dated 23 June 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/48/222).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/48/L.2 AND REV.1

5. On 25 October 1993, Germany and Romania submitted a draft resolution, entitled "Reduction of military budgets: transparency of military expenditures" (A/C.1/48/L.2), which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 35/142 B of 12 December 1980, which introduced the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, 46/25 of 6 December 1991 and 47/54 B of 9 December 1992, dealing with the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters,

"Noting that since then national reports on military expenditures have voluntarily been submitted by a number of Member States belonging to different geographic regions,

"Expressing its appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing Member States with the reports on military expenditures,

"Welcoming the decision of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as contained in the 1990 Vienna Document of the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures, 1/ to exchange information annually on their military budgets, on the basis of the categories of the United Nations standardized reporting system,

"Welcoming also the recent progress achieved in arms limitations and disarmament, which, in the long term, will lead to significant reductions in military expenditures,

"Convinced that the end of the East-West confrontation and the resulting improvement of international relations form a sound basis for promoting further openness and transparency on all military matters,

"Emphasizing that an increased flow and exchange of information on military expenditures will contribute to the predictability of military activities, thus strengthening international peace and security on a global and regional level,

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1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.IX.8, appendix III, p. 488.

"Recalling that the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters stated that the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures should continue in operation and could be further improved,

"1. Calls upon all Member States to participate in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures as adopted by the General Assembly;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on ways and means to strengthen the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and to submit a report on the subject to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;

"3. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session an item entitled 'Transparency of military expenditures'."

6. At the 19th meeting, on 4 November, the representative of Germany, on behalf of Germany and Romania joined by Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, introduced a revised draft resolution (A/C.1/48/L.2/Rev.1). In addition, the revised draft resolution was later sponsored by Canada, Haiti, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Panama, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United States of America.

7. At its 24th meeting, on 11 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.2/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Reduction of military budgets: transparency of military expenditures

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 35/142 B of 12 December 1980, which introduced the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, 46/25 of 6 December 1991 and 47/54 B of 9 December 1992, dealing with the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters,

Noting that since then national reports on military expenditures have voluntarily been submitted by a number of Member States belonging to different geographic regions,

Expressing its appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing Member States with the reports on military expenditures,

Welcoming the decision of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as contained in the 1990 Vienna Document of the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures, 2/ to exchange information annually on their military budgets, on the basis of the categories of the United Nations standardized reporting system,

Welcoming also the recent progress achieved in arms limitations and disarmament, which, in the long term, will lead to significant reductions in military expenditures,

Convinced that the end of the East-West confrontation and the resulting improvement of international relations form a sound basis for promoting further openness and transparency on all military matters,

Emphasizing that an increased flow and exchange of information on military expenditures will contribute to the predictability of military activities, thus strengthening international peace and security on a global and regional level,

Recalling that the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters stated that the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures should continue in operation and could be further improved,

1. Calls upon all Member States to participate in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures as adopted by the General Assembly;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on ways and means to strengthen, and to broaden participation in, the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and to submit a report on the subject to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;

3. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session an item entitled "Transparency of military expenditures".

2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.IX.8, appendix III.